

It is necessary likewise to explain many words by their opposition to others; for contraries are best seen when they stand together. Thus the verb *stand* has one sense as opposed to *fall*, and another as opposed to *fly*; for want of attending to which distinction, obvious as it is, the learned Dr. Bentley has squandered his criticism to no purpose, on these lines of *Paradise Lost*.

- - - In heaps

Chariot and charioteer lay over-turn'd,
And fiery foaming steeds. What *flood*, *recoil'd*,
O'erwearied, through the faint Satanic host,
Defensive scarce, or with pale fear surpris'd
Fled ignominious - - -

"Here," says the critic, "as the sentence is now read, 'we find that what *flood*, *fled*,' and therefore he proposes an alteration, which he might have spared if he had consulted a dictionary, and found that nothing more was affirmed than that those *fled* who did *not* *fall*."

In explaining such meanings as seem accidental and adventitious, I shall endeavour to give an account of the means by which they were introduced. Thus to *eke out* any thing, signifies to lengthen it beyond its just dimensions by some low artifice, because the word *eke* was the usual refuge of our old writers when

when they wanted a syllable. And *buxom*, which means only *obedient*, is now made, in familiar phrase, to stand for *wanton*, because in an ancient form of marriage, before the reformation, the bride promised pleasure and obedience in these terms, "I will be bonair and *buxom* in bed and at board."

I know well, my Lord, how trifling many of these marks will appear separately considered, and how they may give occasion to the contemptuous merriment of sportive idleness, and the gloomy censures of arrogant stupidity; but dulness it is easy to despise, and laud it is easy to repay. I shall not be solicitous with the thought of my work by such as know not the difficulty or importance of philological studies, nor shall I trouble those that have done nothing qualified to commend me for doing little. It may not, however, be proper to remind them, that no terrestrial greatness is more than an aggregate of little things, and to imitate after the Arabian proverb, that drops add up to constitute the ocean.

THERE remains yet to be considered the DISTRIBUTION of words into their proper classes, or that part of lexicography which is strictly critical.

THE popular part of the language, which includes all words not appropriated to particular sciences, admits of many distinctions and subdivisions; as